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CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1   1. - 2. (Canceled)

1   3.   (Currently amended) An apparatus, comprising:

2   a call control component that sets a call category for a call to indicate that the call

3   terminates at an announcement server component prior to connection with a called

4   communication device:

5   wherein upon receipt of an answer message from the announcement server

6   component, the call control component drops the answer message based on the call

7   category; and

8   wherein the call terminates at the announcement server component and the

9   called communication device, wherein the call control component accepts an answer

10   message from the called communication device; and

11   The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the call control component drops the answer

12   message from the announcement server component to prevent an initiation of billing for

13   the call based on the answer message from the announcement server component; and

14   wherein the call control component initiates the billing for the call upon receipt of

15   the answer message from the called communication device.

1   4.   (Currently amended) An apparatus, comprising:

2   a call control component that sets a call category for a call to indicate that the call

3   terminates at an announcement server component prior to connection with a called

4   communication device:

5   wherein upon receipt of an answer message from the announcement server

6   component, the call control component drops the answer message based on the call

7   category; and

8   ~~The apparatus of claim 1~~, wherein the call control component receives the call

9   and sends a signaling message associated with the call to the announcement server

10 component to involve the announcement server component on the call; and

11   wherein the announcement server component plays an announcement for a

12 calling communication device of the call and sends the answer message to the call

13 control component, and wherein the call control component determines to not process

14 the answer message from the announcement server component based on the call

15 category.

1   5. – 6. (Canceled)

1   7.   (Currently amended) An apparatus, comprising:

2   a call control component that sets a call category for a call to indicate that the call

3   terminates at an announcement server component prior to connection with a called

4   communication device;

5   wherein upon receipt of an answer message from the announcement server

6   component, the call control component drops the answer message based on the call

7   category; and

8   wherein a calling communication device initiates the call to the called

9   communication device, and wherein the announcement server component comprises a

10 customized ringback tone component; and

11   wherein the call control component determines that the call meets one or more

12 customized ringback tone criteria set by a user of the called communication device and

13 sets the call category to indicate that the call terminates at the customized ringback tone

14 component; and

15   The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the customized ringback tone component

16 sends the answer message to the call control component and plays a preselected

17 ringback tone to the calling communication device prior to answer by the called

18 communication device; and

19   wherein the call control component determines to not process the answer

20 message to prevent billing for the call while the customized ringback tone component

21 plays the preselected ringback tone to the calling communication device.

1   8.   (Canceled)

1   9.   (Currently amended) An apparatus, comprising:

2   a call control component that sets a call category for a call to indicate that the call

3   terminates at an announcement server component prior to connection with a called

4   communication device;

5   wherein upon receipt of an answer message from the announcement server

6   component, the call control component drops the answer message based on the call

7   category; and

8   wherein the call control component determines to not update a billing record

9   associated with the call based on the answer message from the announcement server

10 component; and

11   ~~The apparatus of claim 1,~~ wherein the billing record comprises an automatic

12   messaging account billing record associated with one or more of the calling

13   communication device and the called communication device.

1   10.   (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 9 [[1]], wherein the call

2   control component comprises a control subcomponent and a switching subcomponent,

3   and wherein the call category comprises a calling party category; and

4   wherein the control subcomponent determines that the call terminates at the

5   announcement server component prior to connection with the called communication

6   device; and

7   wherein the control subcomponent sends a call setup message to the switching

8   subcomponent, and wherein the control subcomponent sets the calling party category in

9   the call setup message to a value that indicates that the call terminates at the

10   announcement server component prior to connection with the called communication

11   device.

1   11.   (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the switching

2   subcomponent employs the calling party category to determine whether to process

3   incoming answer messages from the announcement server component; and

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4   wherein the switching subcomponent checks the calling party category and if the

5   calling party category is set to the value that indicates that the call terminates at the

6   announcement server component, then the switching subcomponent determines to not

7   alert the control subcomponent of the answer message to prevent the control

8   subcomponent from updating a billing record associated with the call based on the

9   answer message from the announcement server component.

1   12.   (Currently amended) An apparatus, comprising:

2   a call control component that sets a call category for a call to indicate that the call

3   terminates at an announcement server component prior to connection with a called

4   communication device;

5   wherein upon receipt of an answer message from the announcement server

6   component, the call control component drops the answer message based on the call

7   category; and

8   ~~The apparatus of claim 1,~~ wherein a carrier trunk supports the answer message

9   between the announcement server component and the call control component, and

10   wherein upon receipt of the answer message from the announcement server

11   component, the call control component employs the call category to determine to not

12   initiate billing for the call based on the answer message.

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1   13.   (Canceled)

1   14.   (Currently amended) A method, comprising the steps of:

2   setting a call category for a call to indicate that the call terminates at an

3 announcement server component prior to connection with a called communication

4 device; and

5   preventing an initiation of billing for the call upon receipt of an answer message

6 from the announcement server component based on the call category;

7   The method of claim 13, wherein the step of setting the call category for the call

8 to indicate that the call terminates at the announcement server component prior to

9 connection with the called communication device comprises the steps of:

10   querying a home location register for an indication of whether the call will employ

11 the announcement server component;

12   determining from the indication that the call terminates at an announcement

13 server component prior to connection with a called communication device; and

14   setting the call category to a value that indicates the call terminates at the

15 announcement server component.

1   15.   (Canceled)

1   16.   (Currently amended) A method, comprising the steps of:

2   setting a call category for a call to indicate that the call terminates at an

3 announcement server component prior to connection with a called communication

4 device; and

5   preventing an initiation of billing for the call upon receipt of an answer message

6   from the announcement server component based on the call category:

7   wherein the call category comprises a calling party category, and wherein the

8   step of setting the call category for the call to indicate that the call terminates at the

9   announcement server component prior to connection with the called communication

10   device comprises the steps of:

11   determining that the call terminates at the announcement server component prior

12   to connection with the called communication device; and

13   sending a call setup message with the calling party category in the call setup

14   message set to a value that alerts a switch component for the call to drop the answer

15   message from the announcement server component; and

16   ~~The method of claim 15,~~ wherein the step of preventing the initiation of billing for

17   the call upon receipt of the answer message from the announcement server component

18   based on the call category comprises the step of:

19   determining to not update a billing record associated with the call for the answer

20   message from the announcement server component based on the calling party category

21   being set to the value.

1   17.   (Currently amended) A ~~method, comprising the steps of:~~

2   ~~setting a call category for a call to indicate that the call terminates at an~~

3   ~~announcement server component prior to connection with a called communication~~

4   ~~device; and~~

5   ~~preventing an initiation of billing for the call upon receipt of an answer message~~

6   ~~from the announcement server component based on the call category;~~

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7   The method of claim 14, wherein the step of preventing the initiation of billing for

8   the call upon receipt of the answer message from the announcement server component

9   based on the call category comprises the steps of:

10   checking the call category upon receipt of the answer message from the

11   announcement server component; and

12   dropping the answer message if the call category is set to a value that indicates

13   the call terminates at the announcement server component.

1   18.   (Currently amended) A method, comprising the steps of:

2   setting a call category for a call to indicate that the call terminates at an

3   announcement server component prior to connection with a called communication

4   device; and

5   preventing an initiation of billing for the call upon receipt of an answer message

6   from the announcement server component based on the call category;

7   The method of claim 14, wherein the step of preventing the initiation of billing for

8   the call upon receipt of the answer message from the announcement server component

9   based on the call category comprises the steps of:

10   dropping the answer message from the announcement server component to

11   prevent an initiation of billing for the call based on the answer message from the

12   announcement server component; and

13   accepting an answer message from the called communication device to initiate

14   the billing for the call upon receipt of the answer message from the called

15   communication device.

1   19.   (Previously presented) A method, comprising the steps of:

2   setting a call category for a call to indicate that the call terminates at an

3   announcement server component prior to connection with a called communication

4   device; and

5   preventing an initiation of billing for the call upon receipt of an answer message

6   from the announcement server component based on the call category;

7   wherein a calling communication device initiates the call to the called

8   communication device, wherein the announcement server component comprises a

9   customized ringback tone component;

1   wherein the step of setting the call category for the call to indicate that the call

2   terminates at the announcement server component prior to connection with the called

3   communication device comprises the steps of:

4   determining that the call meets one or more customized ringback tone criteria set

5   by a user of the called communication device; and

6   setting the call category to indicate that the call terminates at the customized

7   ringback tone component;

8   wherein the customized ringback tone component sends the answer message to

9   the call control component and plays a preselected ringback tone to the calling

10   communication device prior to answer by the called communication device;

11   wherein the step of preventing the initiation of billing for the call upon receipt of

12   the answer message from the announcement server component based on the call

13   category comprises the step of:

14   determining to not process the answer message to prevent billing for the call

15   while the customized ringback tone component plays the preselected ringback tone to

16   the calling communication device.

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1   20.   (Currently amended) An article, comprising:

2   one or more computer-readable signal-bearing media;

3   means in the one or more media for setting a call category for a call to indicate

4   that the call terminates at an announcement server component prior to connection with

5   a called communication device; and

6   means in the one or more media for preventing an initiation of billing for the call

7   upon receipt of an answer message from the announcement server component based

8   on the call category;

9   ~~wherein a call control component determines to not update a billing record~~

10   ~~associated with the call based on the answer message from the announcement server~~

11   ~~component~~

12   wherein the means in the one or more media for preventing the initiation of billing

13   for the call upon receipt of the answer message from the announcement server

14   component based on the call category comprises:

15   means in the one or more media for checking the call category upon receipt of

16   the answer message from the announcement server component; and

17   means in the one or more media for dropping the answer message if the call

18   category is set to a value that indicates the call terminates at the announcement server

19   component.